

As a Professor Emeritus (U. Mass, Amherst), researcher, and author of numerous research publications, textbooks and manuals in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) in the autism area, I want to go on record as *opposing* the proposal to amend last year's legislation related to the credentialing of applied behavior analysts. Applied behavior analysis is a field requiring highly specialized knowledge, skills and precise, accountable practice. In fact the breadth and complexity of these competencies demand that practitioners master an extensive set of skills and demonstrate their ability to practice those precisely and consistently. In so doing, their clients, supervisees and especially students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) progress academically, socially and vocationally at much more rapid rates than otherwise.

ABA is not limited to the field of autism education, but has been practiced with demonstrable success in literally hundreds of areas of application, beyond the autism-education field (e.g., medicine, organizational management, child rearing, safety and so on). Anyone with sufficient commitment can master ABA skills, although to do so requires a major effort. The more skillful in practicing ABA, the more effectively personnel perform. Although increasing numbers of educators are becoming qualified to practice ABA, unfortunately not all educational personnel (including administrators, pupil-personnel, communication and recreation specialists, psychologists, counselors and so on) have mastered the essential skill-set. That being the case, the two groups run the risk of working at cross-purposes, much to the detriment of students, particularly those with ASD.

I would encourage the State of Connecticut to invest in personnel training in ABA rather than to water down the legislation of last year. In the long run, doing so will pay off in the form of educating students on the autism spectrum and others, to become more highly academically and socially skilled and employable. Rather than draining the State of Connecticut coffers, they eventually will become contributors.

Sincerely yours.

Beth Sulzer-Azaroff, Ph.D.